

History of Pike Township, OH

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CHAPTER XXIV PIKE TOWNSHIP

PREVIOUS to 1841, the territory of this township was a part of the townships of Royalton and York. It was then organized as a separate township in conformity with the prayer of certain petitioners. In 1846, another tier of sections was taken from Royalton and added to Pike, thus giving the latter the territory which it exercises jurisdiction over today. The township comprises thirty-six sections, but twelve of these are fractional, and the territory actually contained would probably measure about twenty-eight full sections. Bad creek flows through the central and southeastern portions of the township, and bordering on it is a rich and valuable territory, the natural drainage enhancing the value of the lands traversed, and rendering them available for grazing purposes as well as farming.

Pike township has some evidences of the prehistoric race within her boundaries. Three large mounds are located on the land owned by the late D. W. H. Howard, near Bad creek, each circular in form, some six or seven feet in height and fifty or sixty feet in diameter. On digging into them human skeletons were found, some large and others of ordinary size. But the mounds have doubtless been leveled considerably by the successive plowings of seventy years, aided by climatic erosion, and the casual observer would scarcely notice anything unusual in the conformation of the land.

The soil of this township is decidedly varying. The extreme eastern and southern part is referable entirely to the drift deposits and is what may be denominated clay and sand mixed. The center is largely modified from the western part by the overlapping of the finer sands of the second beach formation upon its western boundary. The whole township has a very gentle inclination east, and with these sand spurs makes the surface gently undulating at various points. The township has a rich soil, susceptible of high cultivation, and some fine farms and excellent improvements attest the truth of this statement. Part of the township was originally covered with a heavy growth of excellent timber, embracing the varieties usually found in this section of the State. These were white-oak, black-oak, hickory, walnut, wild cherry, beech, sugar maple, elm, ash, poplar, buckeye and sycamore. While some valuable timber is still preserved, by far the greater part of it was destroyed in fitting the land for cultivation. That which survived the pioneer log heaps, has submitted to oft-repeated culling for market purposes, or the personal needs of the owners, until at this time the territory where it grew thickest, more resembles the treeless prairies of the west than the original home of a dense forest.

There are no villages in Pike township and no railway invades her confines, yet in times past there have been good trading points, notably Aetna, where considerable business was transacted. Lyman Parcher was the first postmaster in the township. The territory now embraced in the township was first occupied in 1833. Sometime during that year, Valentine Winslow built a small log shanty on section three, town ten south, range three east, and continued to occupy it until 1835, when he located east about one mile, on the east side of the same section, where he died about 1858. The circumstances of his death led some people to believe that it came by foul play, .but a coroner's examination resulted in but little information of how he came to his death. The second settler upon the soil of this township was David Hobart. He came with his family, near the end of the year 1833 or the beginning of 1834, and resided here until 1841, when he died and was buried in the Salsbury cemetery.

Early in 1834, other families began to appear in the township, and among them were the following: Arvetus Knight, Nathan Wilson, Daniel Knowles, John Sindel, George Wiers, and Whitfield Tappan, who was then a young man, and a few others whose time of settlement is uncertain. In fact, Mr. Tappan, who was born in New Jersey, in 1804, settled in Fulton county, in the latter part of 1833. In 1835, a larger accession of colonists was added than in the two former years, to-wit: Peter Lott, Sewall Gunn, Thomas Silsby, Robert A. Howard and Jack Hobart. Peter Lott, however, left the township in June, 1836, and settled in Dover township, near Spring Hill. Thomas Silsby located on section thirty-three, town seven north, range seven east.

Peter Saishury came in 1836, and located a large tract of land in the southeast part of the township, where a large number of his relatives reside today. He came from Harrison county, Ohio, with his patent deed signed by Andrew Jackson, president of the United States. Many others came that year, but the dates of their several arrivals are not satisfactorily known.

The year 1837 was eventful to the earlier settlers by a larger immigration than usual to the township; and this soon brought a change, for instead of poverty and hard times, comfort and plenty came—another illustration of the fact that “in union there is strength,” and the further fact that the soil in any community is indebted for its commercial value to the extent of the population of the district in which it lies. The new arrivals in 1837 were Alva Wilson, Henry Slaigle, Joseph Walters, John Walters, Emery Wilson, Martin Wilson, Peola Aliwood, Thomas Cole, George Megarah, Andrew Falor, George McQuillin, Jacob McQuillin, David Saisbury, Joseph Saisbury, James Viers, Adam Kline, William Cox, Samuel Allen, and two other families by the names of Graham and Thompson. All of the gentlemen named brought families with them, and as some were large in numbers the population was increased considerably. Joseph Walters lived in Pike until 1864, when he moved into Dover township, and some of his descendants are still residents there. He was born in Harrison county, Ohio, March 19, 1813. After coming to Fulton county, he cleared three farms, built four houses and as many barns, set three orchards and lived to eat fruit from each of them. James Viers died in Fulton county, in March, 1875. Ephraim K. and Joseph Aliwood also came this year, bringing their families with them.

From 1837 to 1840 came still greater acquisitions to the prospering colonists, and requiring more room they stepped further into the wilderness parts. Among the families who came to the

township about this time were David McQuillin, George Galligher, David Zimmerman, John W. Miller, Chester Herrick, William Fewlass, Thomas Hoxie, David Pelton, Boyd Dunbar, Robert Dunbar, and Michael Handy and family who came in January, 1840. Chester Herrick was a native of Massachusetts, but the date of his settlement in Fulton county was a little later than the years named above, the time of his arrival being 1843. Mr. Handy came here from the northern part of Michigan. Moses Tappan and Samuel Dennis were here about that time, but they drifted about and changed from other localities or townships in the county. In 1843, Dr. William Holland settled here, coming from New Hampshire, a physician with age and experience, who soon gained a prominent position in the county. Alfred R. Shute and his wife, who was a daughter of Dr. Holland, came at the same date and settled on section two, town ten south, range three east. Simon Elliott, a Protestant Methodist minister, William Mullen, James Dickason, Orrin Taylor, and family, Joshua Shaffer, John Whitaker, Sherman, Marshall and David Fairchilds with families., came at about this time. These make up the principal part of the early pioneers of Pike, who braved the dangers and hardships incident to the settlement of a wilderness, and carved out of it for themselves and their growing families a home, a comfortable home which they left as legacies to those who followed them on earth's stage of action.

Simon Elliott was born in Pennsylvania, January 10, 1809, and the year of his location in Fulton county was 1855. William Mullen settled here in 1849 James Dickason was a native of Pennsylvania.

Pike township was prolific in early industries, there being a number of saw-mills, grist-mills and asheries, constructed and operated at different times from the first settlement, according to the needs of the various communities which they served. These, for the most part were of brief existence, and, in fact, most of them were quickly and cheaply built with no idea of permanence, beyond the demands of the day. Among others was a saw-mill, built about 1835, in the southern part of the township, by Peter Salsbury, who conducted it for some time, furnishing lumber to the early settlers for miles around. It was afterwards owned and run by James Viers successfully for a number of years, as long as it could be furnished with water power, but it was abandoned nearly fifty years ago. Orrin Taylor built and run a steam sawmill for three or four years, about 1876, and connected with it was a cider press. Mr. Taylor lost his life in this mill and it was soon after abandoned and moved to the southeast corner of Chesterfield and run by Peter Stukeey.

Robert A. Howard kept the first public house in the township, opening his doors to the public not far from the year 1835.

Miss Caroline Trowbridge taught a school, in 1835, in an old log hut standing at a very early day upon the knob where the Salsbury cemetery is now located. Michael Handy was another early teacher. The log house in which the first term was taught was afterwards removed to Thomas Silsby's corner, and Mr. Handy taught there the first winter he came, in 1840. This was the pioneer school district, from which has grown a most complete educational system, with six modern school houses, located at convenient distances from all of the pupils.

The first church built was on the farm of William Mullin, in 1846, and it was dedicated by the Presbyterians. It was burned about 1868 or 1869, and never rebuilt. The Poplar Grove church

was built about 1848, and was dedicated to the United Brethren. Beulah Church, of the United Brethren faith, was built in 1881, under the labors of Henry Barclay, who afterwards removed to the State of Oregon and has since become quite prominent in political life there. He has served two terms in the Oregon State Senate. St. Paul's church, of the Evangelical faith, was built in 1881. A church of the Disciples was erected for purposes of worship, in 1881, located in school district number five, called the Trowbridge district. A church of the Seventh Day Adventists was built in 1881, upon lands in district number three, called the Whitcomb district, under the labors of A. Bigelow.